Wednesday, July 17th, 2024











GREDA calls for removal of 17.5% VAT on property sales in mid-year budget

Page 8

E/R: 11 Dengue Fever cases recorded; 57 samples undergo testing



Page 5



Democracy Hub to hold a 3-day demo beginning Sept. 21

Page 6

Local Gov't Minister withdraws L.I. granting siren use rights to MPs, Ministers

Page 6







For business or leisure, there's always a little something extra.

Nearly 2 million Ghanaian youth not in education, employment or training - GSS

recent survey by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) has revealed that nearly 2 million youth in Ghana are neither in education, employment, nor training (NEET).

The 2023 Annual Household Income and Expenditure Survey (AHIES) provides detailed insights into this alarming statistic.

As of the third quarter of 2023, the NEET youth population stood at 1.9 million, with a significant gender disparity: 1.2 million females and 715,691 males.

The Greater Accra Region reported the highest number of NEET youth at 565,360, followed by the Ashanti Region with 352,503, Central Region with 155,171, Eastern Region with 143,601, and Western Region with 137,865.

Females exhibited a higher NEET rate of 21%, compared to

15% for males, highlighting a 6-percentage-point difference.

The Greater Accra Region also had the highest NEET rate among regions at 26.9%, followed by the North East Region at 19.5%.

Despite these numbers, there has been a notable improvement. The national youth NEET rate decreased from 24.1% in 2022 to 18.2% in 2023.

The total number of NEET youth dropped by 462,998 during this period, although Greater Accra was the only region to see a slight increase.

The 2024 World Youth Skills Day emphasized the need for targeted interventions to address these gaps, under the theme "Youth Skills for Peace and Development."

"Greater Accra had the highest NEET rate with a little over a quarter (26.9%) of the population

15 to 35 years not engaged in education, employment, or training. North East Region (19.5%) had the second highest rate with about one in five youth NEET," GSS reported.

"In all, the total number of youth NEET decreased by almost half a million (462,998) over the period.

Between the third quarters of 2022 and 2023, the percentage of youth NEET declined in all regions except Greater Accra which experienced a marginal increase of 0.5 percentage points," the report added.

Source: Independent Ghana | Sebastian Akaho-Tay



File Photo

AG orders Health Ministry to recoup GHS1.34m over missing condoms

The Auditor-General has instructed the Ministry of Health (MOH) to recover GH¢1.34 million from a driver, Joe Gyaten, who failed to deliver about three million male condoms and other contraceptives valued at GH¢1.34 million to the Regional Medical Stores (RMS) in the Eastern Region.

Despite the scheduled delivery date of August 22, 2022, Mr. Gyaten did not complete the delivery.

This triggered an investigation under Section 96 of the Public Financial Management 2016 (Act 921), which mandates accountability for losses or deficiencies in government stores or property.

In its latest report, the Auditor-General highlighted significant financial irregularities totaling over GH¢2.41 billion across various ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in 2023.

Notably, GH¢2.06 million of these irregularities were linked to issues in stores and procurement, including the GH¢1.34 million related to the missing contraceptives.

Theauditidentifiedthediscrepancy through documentation such as the Temporary Central Medical

Stores Requisition and Issue Voucher No. MOH/GHS 308088, dated August 22, 2022.

Subsequent investigations confirmed that the contraceptives never arrived at the RMS, raising concerns about possible misappropriation.

Meanwhile, the MOH forwarded the issue to its Health Intelligence Unit for additional investigation, in collaboration with the Ghana Police Service's Criminal Investigations Department, to thoroughly address the matter.

Source: The Independent Ghana | Phoebe.M.Doku



Male condoms

First-year students to report on Sept. 27 for 2024/25 academic year - GES

The Ghana Education Service (GES) has announced first-year senior high students for the 2024/25 academic year will begin classes on Friday, September 27.

School heads and parents are advised to take note of this date and ensure that their wards are prepared for the new academic term.

In a press statement released on Tuesday, July 16, the GES outlined the timeline for the first semester, indicating that students will conclude their classes and begin their vacation on December 6.

"Management of the Ghana Education Service (GES) wishes to inform all heads of Senior High/ Senior High Technical Schools that the reopening date for 1st vear students of the 2024/2025 academic year is set for September 27," the statement read.

The GES assured that all planned activities and programs for the semester will proceed as scheduled without any changes.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to ensure their children are prepared with the necessary supplies and materials needed for the upcoming academic term.

School heads are also urged to make the necessary arrangements to welcome the new students and facilitate their smooth integration into the school environment.

Source: The Independent Ghana | Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



File Photo

BECE candidate stabbed to death while attempting to break up a fight at Trede

tragic incident occurred in Trede, Atwima Kwanwoma District, as Daniel Fosuhene, a 17-year-old BECE candidate, was fatally stabbed while trying to break up a fight between a couple.

Daniel, a final-year student at Konkori D/A Junior High School, was in his room when he overheard a heated argument between a couple living in the same house. The argument, which stemmed from accusations of infidelity, escalated into a physical fight around 11 p.m. on Wednesday, July 10.2024.

Daniel's mother, Madam Esther Akyaa, told Class FM's Ashanti Regional Correspondent, Elisha Adarkwah, that her son intervened to calm the situation. Tragically, during the altercation, the boyfriend became enraged and stabbed Daniel in the chest.

Despite efforts to save him, Daniel was pronounced dead upon arrival at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH).

The suspect has been apprehended by the police. Madam Akyaa is calling for a swift and thorough investigation to ensure justice for her son. "I want the police to expedite their investigation so that

justice can be served for my late son," she pleaded.

Source: Independent Ghana | Sebastian Akaho-Tay



File Photo

Phase I of Suame Interchange to be completed by end of 2024 - Akufo-Addo

resident Akufo-Addo has announced that the first phase of the Suame Interchange project will be completed by the end of 2024.

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony for the dualisation of Anhwiankwanta-Ahenema Kokoben road, the President assured that contractors are on track to meet this deadline.

President Akufo-Addo highlighted his administration's dedication to improving road infrastructure, addressing the consistent complaints from motorists about congestion.

He emphasized the government's commitment to dualising roads in densely populated areas along major corridors.

"The Akufo-Addo government remains focused on commitment to dualising roads in densely populated areas along our major corridors. A key initiative to demonstrate our dedication to decongesting these vital regions,"

he stated.

He cited ongoing projects such as the dualisation of the Ofankor-Nsawam and Adenta roads as evidence of the government's real-life strategy to solve challenges.

He also mentioned the Suame Roundabout to Tafo-Pankrono corridor as another focus area. "The strategic projects we're initiating, such as the dualisation of the Ofankor-Nsawam road and the Adenta road, are not merely infrastructure projects, but also a confirmation of the government's approach to solving real-life challenges. The government is committed to replicating such successful initiatives along other corridors of the region, such as Suame Roundabout to Tafo-Pankrono."

President Akufo-Addo noted that the project is progressing steadily, with several components nearing completion.

"The overpass on the Offinso

road, Anomangye-Magazine road, Abusuakurowa, as well as 15 kilometres of the road around Suame roundabout, are some 40% complete. It is programmed that these overpasses will be successfully completed before the end of this year."

He reiterated that these projects are part of broader measures to enhance the road network in the Ashanti Region, aiming to reduce travel times, lower vehicle operating costs, and improve safety.

"The dualisation of the Ahenema Kokoben road is part of measures to improve the conditions of the road network in the Ashanti Region. These measures are targeted at reducing travel times, lowering vehicle operating costs, and improving safety."

The President urged contractors to implement safety measures to ease the stress on motorists during the construction period.

Independent Source: The Ghana



Nana Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana

Chinese national and Ghanaian accomplice arrested at Paga border with firearms, gold, and cash

Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) has intercepted a shipment of arms at the Paga Border Post, resulting in the arrest of a Chinese national and his Ghanaian accomplice.

The suspects were attempting to cross the border in a Burkina Faso-registered Toyota RAV4 with the number plate 0919G203.

Upon reaching the Ghana side of the border, the suspects tried to evade Immigration control by speeding off.

However, Inspector Ebenezer Badu and AICO Charles Taali, who were on duty, pursued and apprehended them. The suspects were identified as Mr Zhou Quan, a Chinese national, and Mr Awato Kwame, his Ghanaian accomplice.

A search conducted on the vehicle revealed two Chinese pump

action guns (Golden Eagle), eleven packs of body amour bags, two jack knives, fifteen electronic gold scales, three phones, one pack of suspected gold ore, GHC147,160.00, CFA51,000.00 and USD330.00.

In a statement posted on X (formerly Twitter) on July 15, the GIS praised the vigilance and dedication of its officers at the Paga Border Post. "The vigilance of our Immigration Officers at the Paga Border Post has led to the interception and arrest of a Chinese national and his Ghanaian accomplice," the GIS stated in the post.

The GIS reiterated its commitment constant surveillance and proactive measures to maintain national security. The Service emphasized that such efforts are crucial in preventing the influx of

illegal arms and ensuring the safety and security of the country.

Authorities are continuing their investigation into the incident to determine the full extent of the suspects' activities and any possible connections to other illegal operations.

Source: The Independent Ghana | Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey



Mr Zhou Quan & Mr Ato Awato Kwame, Suspects

E/R: 11 Dengue Fever cases recorded; 57 samples undergo testing

he Eastern Regional Health Directorate of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) has reported an increase in Dengue Fever cases, bringing the total to 11 confirmed cases following the recent confirmation of two additional cases.

This update follows the GHS's declaration of a Dengue Fever outbreak in multiple districts of the Eastern Region on July 14.

Initially identified in three districts and municipalities, the outbreak has now spread to five districts: Birim Central, Birim North, Akyemansa, Birim South, and Achiase.

Speaking at a press briefing in Koforidua, the Regional Director of Health Services, Dr. Winfred Ofosu, disclosed the latest figures and cautioned that more cases could be confirmed soon.

"A total of 11 cases have been confirmed by the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research. The region is expecting feedback from 57 more samples that are being worked on. The region is currently managing 103 suspected cases. So, I am sure many of you have the information that, initially, it was 9. Some tests were done, and two turned out to be positive," Dr. Ofosu stated.

The GHS had initially confirmed nine cases of Dengue Fever, and the recent increase underscores concerns among health officials and residents.

Dr. Ofosu reassured the public of the GHS's readiness to respond effectively to the outbreak. He

urged residents in affected districts to seek medical attention promptly if they experience symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, joint and muscle pain, rash, or mild bleeding.

The Eastern Regional Health Directorate is intensifying efforts to control the spread of Dengue Fever through enhanced public awareness campaigns and healthcare provision.

Health authorities have been encouraged to stay informed and adhere to guidelines from health officials to mitigate the impact of the Dengue Fever outbreak.

Source: The Independent Ghana | Phoebe.M.Doku



File Photo

Labour unions can shut down the country - Prof Agyemang-Duah warns government

ormer UN Senior Governance **◄** Advisor, Prof Baffour Agyemang-Duah, criticised the government for underestimating the power of organised labour, describing it as a "sleeping giant."

He emphasised the serious consequences of interfering with the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) fund, which secures the future of workers.

In a media engagement on July 15, 2024, Prof Agyemang-Duah stated, "If organised labour wants to paralyse the whole country, they are in a position to do so. That was why I was surprised when they were defending what was indefensible and dragging their feet. SSNIT represents the future of all workers in the country because, by law, you are supposed to keep part of their salaries hoping that upon retirement, they may get some cushion to lay their head. So, if someone is playing with that kind of future, you can understand why workers will rise in unison to oppose it."

He also commented on SSNIT's proposal to sell 60% of its shares in four hotels, suggesting either a poor presentation of SSNIT's case or a significant conflict of interest.

Organised labour had suspended its strike on July 15, initially launched in protest against SSNIT's plan to sell these shares to a private firm owned by Food and Agriculture Minister, Bryan Acheampong.

The decision to suspend the strike was announced by Dr Yaw Baah, Secretary General of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), during a press conference following an emergency meeting. He mentioned that they are granting SSNIT a month to resolve all remaining pension issues or "they will decide their next steps."

Prof Agyemang-Duah described the strained relationship between organised labour and SSNIT as "troubling," and criticised the Trust for seemingly supporting a public official involved in purchasing state assets.

He reminded the government

of past labour movements that significant impacts had governance, stating, "In the 70s, labour paralysed the military regime of the time. Between 1975 to 1977, there were lots of labour agitations, leading to internal changes within the government itself. Since then, we know that whenever labour begins to rumble over these matters, the government begins to have no

options but to capitulate."

He also drew parallels with recent events in Kenya, noting, "Perhaps, lessons must be learnt from the Kenya peaceful demonstration which rolled into something else and forced the government to swallow its own bill and go beyond that to quickly drop the cabinet."

Source: The *Independent* Ghana



Professor Baffour Agyemang-Duah, Former UN Senior Governance Advisor

Democracy Hub to hold a 3-day demo beginning Sept. 21

emocracy Hub, a prominent advocacy group, has announced a three-day demonstration from September 21-23 at Revolution Square, across Liberation Road, opposite the Jubilee House. The protest will start each day at 6 am.

In a press release dated Monday, July 15, Democracy Hub confirmed they have notified Inspector General of Police Dr. George Akuffo Dampare, complying with the Public Order Act. This ensures the demonstration has the necessary legal authorization.

The protest aims to address significant issues affecting the nation, including socio-economic injustice, unemployment, and rising poverty levels. Additionally, it targets state capture, nepotism, and corruption, and calls for judicial independence.

Democracy Hub stressed the importance of tackling these issues for the country's progress and the well-being of its citizens. "Democracy Hub, the Convenor of the #FixTheCountry movement #OccupyJulorbiHouse protests, wishes to notify the public and media outlets of our upcoming peaceful protest under the theme 'A New Constitution for a New Generation," the statement

The demonstration will begin at 6:00 AM on September 21 and conclude at 11:59 PM on September 23, 2024, at Revolution Square. Democracy Hub has formally notified the Inspector General of Police, in compliance with the Public Order Act.

"The protest is organized to address several critical issues plaguing Ghanaian society, with a particular focus on socioeconomic injustice, lack of jobs, rising poverty, state capture, nepotism, corruption, and the

need for judicial independence," the statement continued.

In September 2023, Democracy Hub organized a similar protest, dubbed #OccupyJulorbiHouse, which received significant attention and participation. This upcoming demonstration expected to draw a considerable crowd, reflecting growing public concern over these pressing

issues.

Democracy Hub invites all concerned citizens and media outlets to join them in this peaceful protest, emphasizing that collective action is essential for driving meaningful change in Ghana.

Source: The Independent Ghana



Local gov't minister withdraws controversial siren use rights for MPs and ministers

The Legislative Instrument (LI) proposing amendments the Road Traffic Regulations 2012 has been withdrawn from Parliament.

The decision was announced by the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Martin Adjei Mensah Korsah, acted on behalf of the Transport Minister.

This move follows significant backlash from the public and various stakeholders.

"The withdrawal became necessary based on extensive engagement with leadership," Mr. Korsah explained.

He continued, "Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that the Road Traffic Amendment 2024, which was laid on Friday, June 14, be withdrawn... it is so withdrawn."

The Ministry of Transport initially proposed the LI to amend portions of the Road Traffic Regulations 2012. The amendment aimed to grant Members of Parliament (MPs) and Ministers of State privileges typically reserved for emergency and specialized vehicles.

Specifically, it sought to amend Regulation 74 of LI 2180 to allow sirens or bells to be fitted as warning appliances on vehicles owned by Supreme Court justices, MPs, and Ministers of State.

The proposal faced strong opposition from both the public and the Minority in Parliament. The Minority issued a press statement urging the Transport Minister to withdraw the LI before it matured in 21 days.

They also pledged to vote against the LI if it reached the chamber, stating, "We have instructed all our Members on the Committee to strongly oppose it at the committee level. We have also directed all 137 NDC Members of Parliament to vote en bloc against the LI when it is brought to the floor."

Critics argued that the LI represented an abuse of privileges and detracted from pressing national issues.

They urged the government to prioritize addressing critical challenges such as the high cost of living, food inflation, unemployment, high fuel costs, the depreciation of the cedi, and a high tax regime driving businesses to relocate to neighbouring West African countries.

Source: The *Independent* Ghana



File Photo





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Business

Prices of fuel surge by 2%; petrol now GHC15.10, diesel at GHC_{15.25} a litre

¬uel prices in Ghana have increased, with several Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) adjusting their rates at the pumps due to global oil market developments and currency fluctuations.

Shell has raised its prices, with petrol now at GHC 15.10 per litre and diesel at GHC 15.25. This marks a 2% increase for petrol and a 2.2% increase for diesel from their previous prices of GHC 14.80 and GHC 14.92, respectively.

Star Oil, another major OMC, has adjusted its petrol price to GHC 13.93 per litre while slightly lowering diesel prices to GHC 14.70. Previously, Star Oil sold petrol at GHC 13.88 and diesel at GHC 14.79.

The price hikes are attributed

to rising crude oil prices on the international market and the depreciation of the cedi against the dollar.

The Chamber of Petroleum (COPEC) Consumers has forecasted a 4% increase in fuel prices effective July 16, 2024, citing these economic factors.

COPEC analysis

Earlier, the Chamber of Petroleum Consumers (COPEC) forecasted a 4.0 percentage points hike in prices of petroleum products, effective Tuesday, July 16, 2024.

COPEC reported that the retail prices for petrol, diesel, and LPG are set to rise due to the cedi's depreciation against the dollar, shifting from \$1:GHS15.2779 to \$1:GHS15.462 (-1.205%).

COPEC's Executive Secretary, Duncan Amoah outlined expected price changes: Petrol to GHS14.795/L, Diesel GHS15.332/L, and LPG GHS16.205/kg, with a 14.5 kg cylinder reaching GHS234.97.

COPEC urged the government

to cut taxes or subsidize LPG to boost accessibility and protect the environment.

Source: Independent Ghana | Sebastian Akaho-Tay



File Photo

GREDA calls for removal of 17.5% VAT on property sales in mid-year budget

■ takeholders in the real estate sector are expressing concern the government's reinstatement of a 17.5 percent Value Added Tax (VAT) on the sale of immovable properties.

They contend that the tax is stifling sector growth and criticize the lack of consultation before its reimplementation.

They are urging the government to eliminate the tax, aligning with its promise to avoid new taxes in the mid-year budget review set for Tuesday, July 23.

The Executive Secretary of the Ghana Real Estate Developers' Association (GREDA), Samuel Amegayibor, stated:

"They never engaged us. All of a sudden, there is a directive that the tax should be implemented, and then they have gone ahead to develop guidelines without a major stakeholder like GREDA.

"So how do you expect us to be your agent of tax collection and you don't involve us in the guidelines, and then you just snap on us? I was surprised. I saw a copy of this

guideline just last night."

He added: "As the Executive Secretary of GREDA, I have not seen what my sector is supposed to help implement for the government to make revenue. Then what are we doing? I think these are some of the things that we are talking

about.

Sources: The Independent Ghana | Amanda Cartey



Real estate building

International

Kagame wins Rwanda vote in landslide - partial results

wandan President Paul rule by another five years in a landslide victory, with most of the votes counted from Monday's election.

He has 99.15% of the vote so far, with about 79% of ballots counted, partial results announced by the electoral commission show.

The 66-year-old again faced no meaningful opposition, leading figures banned. His two opponents shared less than 1% of the vote.

Mr Kagame thanked Rwandans for their trust in an address at his Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) party headquarters.

"These are not just figures, even

if it was 100%, these are not just numbers. [They] show the trust, and that is what is most important," Mr Kagame said.

His opponents - environmentalist Frank Habineza and ex-journalist and government adviser Philippe Mpayimana - have 0.53% and 0.32% respectively.

The full provisional results are due by 20 July and final ones by 27

The results come as no surprise. They mirror the 2017 election's outcome that had the same candidates taking part - which Mr Kagame won with 98.8% of the vote.

At least three aspirants were disqualified from running, including Diane Rwigara,

outspoken critic of Mr Kagame.

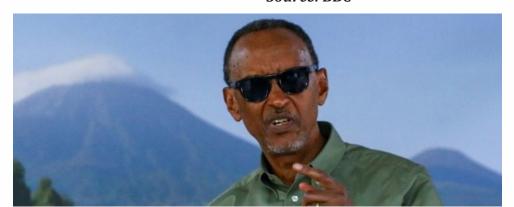
The electoral commission says 98% of the more than 9.5 million eligible voters took part in the elections. They were voting for a president and 53 legislators.

Elections for 27 special seats meant for women, young people and people with disabilities will take place on Tuesday.

Mr Kagame has been the de-facto leader of Rwanda since the end of the 1994 genocide and president since 2000.

Rights groups accuse him of curtailing freedoms since taking office, while his supporters say he had presided over economic growth and helped end ethnic divisions.

Source: BBC



Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda

Gambia parliament rejects bill to end ban on female genital mutilation

ambia's parliament Monday rejected a bill that would have ended a ban on female genital mutilation, after lawmakers voted down all the clauses in the proposed law.

"The ban on FGM is still firmly maintained in the Gambia," the Ministry of Information said in a statement after the vote. "Government stands firm in its resolve to eliminate this harmful practice."

The bill to overturn the ban sparked a public debate about female genital mutilation for the first time in the West African nation that divided villages, families and parliament.

The lawmaker who took the proposal to parliament, Almaneh Gibba, said he was upholding cultural and religious prerogatives in the Muslim-majority country where FGM is widespread and deeply rooted. Many Islamic scholars dispute his arguments.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says FGM has no health benefits and can lead to excessive bleeding, shock, psychological problems and even death.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus commended parliament's decision in a joint statement with high-level United Nations representatives.

"The fragility of progress to end FGM cannot be overstated. Assaults on women's and girls' rights in countries around the globe have meant that hard-won gains are in danger of being lost," the statement said.

The bill had passed a second reading in March with only five out of 53 lawmakers voting against it, raising concerns among rights advocates that Gambia would become the first to reverse a ban on the practice.

But after holding weeks of public hearings, parliament's health and gender affairs committees presented a joint report on July 8 recommending that Gambia maintain the ban.

Lawmakers adopted the report by a vote of 35 to 17 with two

abstentions. Political analysts said lawmakers may have been swayed by testimonies from doctors and survivors about FGM's harmful consequences.

Parliament voted again on Monday on each of the bill's clauses ahead of a third and final reading scheduled for July 24.

Around 30 MPs voted against each clause, prompting Parliament Speaker Fabakary Tombong Jatta to stop the bill moving forward to the final reading.

"The (National) Assembly cannot be engaged in such a futile exercise as to allow the bill to proceed to a third reading," Jatta said after the votes. "The bill is rejected and the legislative process exhausted."

Gibba said he could not immediately comment because the parliamentary session was ongoing.

Anti-FGM activist Fatou Baldeh, who was cut when she was 8, said she was relieved, but also disappointed the bill had been considered in the first place.

"I am not celebrating for the fact that our women and girls' lives were put on the line. That made me sad," Baldeh said.

Gambian legal scholar Satang Nabaneh said the bill's rejection showed Gambia's commitment to international and human rights obligations.

"We are hoping that this is a clear call for implementation (of anti-FGM laws)," she added.

Anti-FGM campaigners say the 2015 law banning FGM has been poorly enforced, which the government denies.

The first and only conviction so far, of three women found guilty of cutting eight infant girls, occurred in 2023, prompting Gibba to introduce the repeal bill.

Source: Reuters.com



